

cigar, could you, cap?"
"I don't know," said I, as though

was that you were going to tell me just now? You started to tell me what a

'lovely sucker' I'd have been had you

met me this morning. How did you

"Give me a cigar and I'll tell you.

Oh, come, now, cap; give me a smoker and I'll give you the whole game. I

"Nothin' mean about you, is they?"

he said, eagerly taking a fresh cigar

in one hand and the stub in the other.

"A ten-center, too-oh, I guess not!"

But, to my surprise, he took the stub

between his "ps, and began opening

his coat. "Guess I'll jist fat this daisy,

and save 'er up for Christmas. No, I

won't either," he broke in suddenly,

with a bright, keen flash of second

thought. "Tell you what I'll do," hold-ing up the cigar and gazing at it ad-

miringly; "she's a ten-center all right, ain't she?"

"Every cent of it," I repeated.

"And worth every cent of it, too,

"Then give me a nickel, and she's

yourn—'cause if you can afford to give this to me fer nothin', looks like I ort

to let you have it fer half price," and

as I laughingly dropped the nickel in his hand he concluded, "And they's

"Now, go on with your story," said I. "How about this 'game' you were 'giv-

"Well, I'll tell you, cap. Us fellers has got to lay fer ever' nickel, 'cause

none of us is bondholders; and they's

days and days together when we don't

make enough to even starve on. What

I mean is, we on'y make enough to pay

fer aggrevatin' our appetites with fist

bout enough chuck to keep us starvin'-

hungry. So, you see, when a feller

ain't got nothin' else to do, and his

appetite won't sleep in the same bunk

with him, he's bound to git on to

somepin' crooked and git up all sorts

o' dodges to git along. Some gives

em one thing, ard some another, but

you bet they got to be mighty slick

now, 'cause people won't have 'orphans,' and 'fits,' and 'cripples,' and

drunk fathers,' and 'mothers that eats

morphine, and 'white-swellin', and

consumption, and all that sort o'

taffy! Got to git 'er down finer'n trat! But I been a gittin' in my work all the

same, don't you fergit! You won't ever

"How could I 'blow,' and what if I

"Well, you better never blow, any

how; 'cause if ever us duffers would

git on to it you'd be a sp'iled oyster!"

did? I don't live here," I replied.

blow, now?

nothin' mean about me, neither!

ing' this morning?

deliberating on the matter.

will, now, honest!"

I nodded.

ain't she?"

I held out the open case.

(From Yesterday's Daily.)

a cart load of 'em fer 75 cents. I'll icke yer measure fer one like it fer 15, too quick!" and the little fellow leaned back from his work and laughed up in my face with absolute derision. I pulled my hat more closely down for fear of recognition, but was reassured a moment later as he went on:

"Wisht you lived here; you'd be old fruit fer us fellows. I can see you now a-takin' wind-and we'd give it to you mighty slick now, don't you fergit!" and as the boy renewed his work, I think his little, ragged body shook less with industry than mirth.

"Wisht I'd struck you bout ten o'clock this morning!" and, as he spoke, he paused again and looked up in my face with real regret. you'd 'a' been the loveliest sucker of 'em all! W'y, you'd 'a' went the whole pot yerse'f!

"How do you mean?" said I, dropping the cigar I held. 'How do I mean? Oh, you don't

want to smoke this thing again after its a-rollin' round in the dirt!"

"Why, you don't smoke," said I reaching for the cigar he held behind

him, "Me! Oh, what you givin' me?" "Come, let me have it," I said, sharp ly, drawing a case from my pocket and taking out another cigar.

"Oh, you want a light," he said, handing me the stub and watching me



wistfully. "Couldn't give us a fresh **PROFESSIONAL**

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"The lay I'm on jist now," he continued, dropping his voice and looking cautiously around, "is a-hidin' my box and a-rushin' in, suddent-like, where they's crowd o' nobs a-talkin' politics er somepin', and a-jist startin' in, and 'fore they know what's a-comin' I'm a-flashin' up a nickel er a dime, and a-tellin' 'em if I only had enough more to make 50 cents I could buy a blackin' box, and wouldn't have to ast no boot o' my grandmother! And two minutes chinnin' does it, don't you see, cause they don't know nothin' bout blackin boxes; they're jist as soft as you air. They got an idy, maybe, that blackin' boxes comes all the way from Chiny, with cokeyr it whiskers packed 'round' 'em; and I make it solid by a-sayin' I'm on'y go a' to git a second-hand box But that ain't the p'int-it's the Mr. Nickel I already got. Oh! It'll paralyze 'em ever' time! Sometimes fellers'll make up 75 cents er a dollar and tell me to 'git a new box, and go into the business right.' That's a thing that always rattles me. Now, if they'd on'y growl a little and look like they was fist a-puttin' up 'cause the first one did, I can stand it; but when they go to pattin' me on the head, and a-tellin' me 'that's right,' and 'not to be afeared o' work,' and I'll 'come out all right,' and a tellin' me to 'git a good substantial box while I'm a-gittin',' and a-ponyin' up handsome, there's where I weaken-I do, honest!" And never so plainly as at that moment did I see within his face and in his

eyes the light of true nobility. "You see," he went on, in a tone of voice half courage, half apology, "I' got a family on my hands, and I' list got to git along somehow! I could git along on the square deal as long as mother was alive-'cause she'd work-but ever sence she died-and that was winter 'fore last-I've kind o' had to double on the old thing all sorts o' ways. But Sis don't know it. Sis, she thinks I'm the squarest muldoon in the business,' and even side by side with the homely utterance a great sigh faltered from his lips.

"And who is Sis?" I inquired with new interest.

"Sis?" he repeated, knocking my foot from the box, and leaning back, still in the old position, his hat now lying on the ground beside him, and his frowzy hair tossed backward from the full, broad brow-"Who's Sis?" he re peated with an upward smile that almost dazzled me-"W'y, Sis is-is-w'y, Sis is the boss girl-and don't you

No need had he to tell me more than I knew who "Sis" was by the light of pride in the uplifted eyes; I knew who "Sis" was by the exultation in the broken voice, and the half-defant tossing of the frowsy head; I knew who "Sis" was by the little, naked hands thrown upward openly; I knew who "Sis" was by the tear that dared to trickle through the dirt upon her ragged brother's face. And don't

O that boy down there upon his knees!—there in the cinders and the dirt-so far, far down beneath us that we frample on his breast and grind our neels into his very heart; O that boy there, with his lifted eyes, and God's own glory shining in his face, has taught me, with an eloquence beyond the trick of mellow-sounding words and metaphor, that love may find a purer home beneath the rags of poverty and vice than in all the great warm heart of Charity.

I hardly knew what impulse prompted me, but as the boy rose to his feet and held his hand out for the compensat'on for his work, I caught the little dingy palm close, close within my own, and wrung it as I would have wrong the hand of some great con-

The little fellow stared at me in wonderment, and although his lips were silent, I cannot but believe that had they parted with the utterance within his heart my feelings had re-ceived no higher recognition than the old contemptuous phrase, "Oh, what you givin' me?"

"And so you've got a family on your hands?" I inquired, recovering an air of simple curiosity, and toying in my pocket with some bits of change. "How

much of a family?"
"On'y three of us now."

"Only three of you, eh? Yourself, and Sis, and—and—".
"The old man," said the boy, uneasily; and after a pause, in which he seemed to swallow an utterance more bitter, he added, "And he ain't no good

"Can't work?" I queried.
"Won't work," said the boy, bitterly.
"He won't verk—he won't do nothin'
—on'y budge! And I haf to steer him give "HcR" a Diamond ring for Christmas; and if you get it here, in ever night, 'cause the cops won't she'll be "DELIGHTED." too pull him any more—they won't let him in the station house more'n they'd let him in a parier, 'cause he's a plury' goner now, and liable to croak any minute." because "SHE" knows that it will

> "Liable to jist keel over—sink out, you know—'cause he has fits—kind o' limjanis, I guess. Had a fear-ul old imains, a guess. Had a fear, ut our matines with him last night! You were he comes all sorts of games on me, and I had to put up fer him—cause he's got to have whisky, and if we can only keep him about so full he's a regular. lamb; but he don't stand no monkey

"Liable to what?" said I.

in' when he wants whisky, now you bet! Siz can handle him better'n mb, but she's been a-losin' her grip on him more, and been kind o' sick-like so long she humors him, you know, more'n she'd set. And he couldn't git on his pins at all yisterday morning, and Sis gent fer inc, and I took him down a pint, and that set him arunnin' so that when I left he made Sis give up a

barke! upon some pleasant trip, perquarter he saw me slip her; and it haps; had them rattle off in scraps of jist happened I run into him that eve-ning and get him in, or he'd a froze to song, or lightly twit us with some dear one's name, or even go so fer as to death. I guess he must 'a' kind o' had laugh at us and moch es for some real 'em last night, 'cause he was the wildor fancied dereliction of car etiquette. est man you ever see saw grasshop-I shall ever have good reason to repers with paper collars on, and old member how once upon a time a boy sows with feather-duster tails-the of fourteen, though greatly under-sized, durndest program you ever heard of! told the conductor he was only ten, And he got so bad onc't he was a goin' and, although the unsuspecting official to belt Sis, and did try it; and-and I accepted the statement as a truth, had to chug him one or he'd 'a' done it. with the proper reduction in the fare, And then he cried, and Sis cried, and the car-wheels called that boy a "liar" I cri-, I- Dern him! you can bet yer for 20 miles-and 20 miles as long and life I didn't cry!" And as the boy tedious as he has ever compassed in spoke, the lips quivered into stern compression, the little hands gripped closer his journey through this vale of tears. at his side, but for all that the flashing

The car-wheels on this bitter winter evening were not at all communica They were sullen and morose They didn't feel like singing, and they wouldn't laugh. They had no jokes and if there was one peculiar quality my hand the three small coins I had of tone they possessed in any marked degree it was that of sneering. They

had a harsh, discordant snarl, as it

seemed, and were spiteful and insinu-

The topic they had chosen for that

night's consideration was evidently of

a very complex and mysterious nature,

and they gnawed and mumbled at it

with such flerceness and; withal, such

selfishness, I could only catch a flying

fragment of it now and then, and that,

tening with the most painful interest,

I at last made out the fact that the in-

flection seemed to be in the interroga-

tive, and, with anxiety the most in-

seemed determined not to round into

fuller significance than to query mock-

ingly, "How fur is it? How fur is it?

How fur, how fur is it?" and so on to

senseless phrase was repeated and re-

iterated in its growing harshness and

pertinacity of the query grew simply

agonizing, and when at times the car door opened to admit a brakeman, or

round into form and shape more tan-

streets rode lordly carriages, so weight-ed down with coatly silks, and furs, and twinkling gems, and unknown treasures in unnumbered packages, that one lone ounce of needed charity

would have snapped their axles, and

would have snapped their axiss, and feather's weight of pure benevolence would have splintered every spoke.

And the old refrain rode with me, through it all—as stoical, relentless and unchangeable as fate—and in the

same deprayed and slangy tone in which it seemed to find an especial pride, it sang, and sang again:

dismal satisfaction:

points, but the proposition

noticed, was of the coarsest fiber of

dimes and a nickel there, and was thinking that, as these were Christmas times. I'd just give you a quarter for your work." 'Honest, Cap?" "Honest!" I repeated, "but the fact is the two dimes, as I thought they were, are only two three-cent pieces, so I have only eleven cents in change, after all." 'Spect they'd change a bill fer you

eyes grew blurred and the lids dropped

"That's a boss shine on them shoes."

I was mechanically telling over in

"That is a nice job!" said I gazing

with an unusual show of admiration at

the work; "and I thought," continued

I, with real regret, "that I had two

drawn from my pocket.

'crost there at the lunch counter," he suggested, with charming artlessness Won't have time-there's my train just coupling. But take this-I'll see

you again some time, perhaps." "How big a bill is it you want changed?" asked the little fellow, with a most acquisitive expression, and a

swift glance at our then lonely surroundings. "I only have one bill with me," said I, nervously, "and that's a five."

"Well, here, then," said the boy, hur riedly, with another and more scrutinizing glance about him—"guess I can 'commodate you." And as I turned in wonder, he drew from some mysteri ous recess in the lining of his coat a roll of bills, from which he hastily detached four in number, then returned the roll; and before I had recovered from my surprise, he had whisked the note from my fingers and left in my hand instead the proper change.

"This is on the dead, now, Cap Don't you ever cheep about me havin wealth, you know: 'cause it ain't mine -that is, it is mine, but I'm a-There goes yer train. Ta-ta!"

"The day before Christmas," said I snatching his hand, and speaking hur riedly-"the day before Christmas, I'm coming back, and if you'll be here when the five-thirty train rolls in you'l. find a man that wants his boots blacked-maybe to get married in, or something-anyway he'll want a shine like this, and he'll come prepared to pay the highest market price—d. you understand?"

"You jist tell that feller fer me said the boy, eclipsing the twinkle of one eye, and dropping his voice to an inflection of strictest confidence jist tell that feller fer me that I'm his Oyster!"

"And you'll meet him, sure?" said I "I will," said the boy. And he kept his word.

My ride home was an incoherent fluttering of the wings of time, in which travail one fretful hour was born, to gasp its first few minutes help lessly; then moan, roll over and kick out its legs and sprawl about; then crawl a little stagger to its feet and totter on; then tumble down a time or two and knock its empty head against the floor and howl; then loom up awk wardly on gangling legs, too much in



The train, that for five minutes had been lessening in speed, toiled painfully along, and as I arose impatieatly and reached behind me for my oversuate, a cheery voice cried, "Helio, Capt Want a lift? I'll he'p you with that benjamin;" and as I looked around I the grimy features of my 'tile hero of the brush and box. hero of the brush and box.

"Mello!" said L, as much delighted
as surprised. "Where did you drop

How fur how fur le st from here From here to Happ

"Oh. I collared this old heards a mile or so back yonder," said the little fallow, gayly, standing on the sent be-hind me and holding up the cont. "Been admin our as-business can the is violent convulsions.
We have all had that experience of

steps out there fer half an hour. You bet I had my eye on you, all the same, though!"

"You had, ch?" I exclaimed, gladly, although I instinctively surmised his highest interest in me was centered in my pocketbook. "You had, eh?" I repeated with more earnestness. "Well. I'm glad of that, Charlie-or, what is

"Squatty," said the boy. Then noticing the look of surprise upon my face, he added soberly: "That ain't my sure-enough name, you know; that's what the boys calls me. Sis calls me Jamesy.'

"Well, Jamesy," I continued, buttoning my collar and drawing on my gloves, "I'm mighty glad to see you, and if you don't believe it, just go down in that right-hand overcoat-pocket and you'll find out."

The little fellow neded no second invitation, and as he drew forth a closely folded package the look of curiosity upon his face deepened to one of blank bewilderment.

He made no motion to untie the little package, and gradually the expres-

sion in his eyes changed to one of suspicion and his lips closed tightly together. "Open it," said I, smiling at the puzled little face; "open it—it's for you." "Oh, here, cap," said the boy, drop-

ping the package on the seat, and holding up a rigid finger, "you're agivin' me this, ain't you?" "I'm giving you the package, cer

tainly." said I, somewhat bewildered. "Open it—it's a Christmas present for you-open it!" "What's your idy o' layin' fer me?"

asked the boy, with a troubled and uneasy air. "I've been a-givin' you square business right along, ain't 1?"

"Why, Jamesy," said I, as I vaguely comprehended the real drift of his thought, "the package is for you, and if you won't open it, I will," and as I spoke I began unfolding it. "Here," said I, "is a pair of gloves a little girl about your size told me to give to you, because I was telling her about you, over where I live, and it's 'a clear case,'" and I laughed lightly to myself as I noticed a slow flush creeping to his face. "And here," said I, "is a bang-up pair of good old-fashioned socks, and, if they'll fit you, there's an old woman that wears specs and a mole on her nose, told me to tell you, for her, that she knit them for your Christmas present, and 't you don't wear; them she'll never forgive you. And here," I continued, "is a cap, as fuzzy as a woolly-worm, and as warm a cap. I reckon, as you ever stood on your head in; it's a cheap cap, but I bought it with my own money, and money that I worked mighty hard to get, because I sin's rich; now, if I was rich, I'd buy you a plug; but I've got an idea that this little, old, woolly cap, with earbobe to it, and a snapper to go under your chin, don't you see, won't

weither as this. What do you say, now! Try her on once," and as I spoke I turned to place it on his head.

"Combodi" he negatively murmured, putting out his head, his closed lips quivering—the little frowsy head intelligence, and of slangy flavor. Listense, I slowly came to comprehend that they were desirous of ascertain-ing the exact distance between two

drooping forward, and the rugged spoes shuffing on the floor.
"Come," said I, my own voice grow-the curiously changed: "won't you take these presents? They are yours; you must accept them, Jamesy, not because they're worth so very much, or be-cause they're very fine," I continued, banding down and folding up the parcel, "but because you know, I want you it, and and you must take them; you must!" and as I concluded. a most exasperating limit. As this I thrust the tightly folded parcel be neath his arm, and pressed the little tattered elbow firmly over it. "There you are," said I. "Freete op unchanging intonation, the relentless

the train-boy, who had everything to to it, and we'll skip off here at the sell but what I wanted, the emphasized evenue. Come.

refrain would lift me from my reat I found myself upon the street, but as I and drag me up and down the alsie. throw an eager glance over my shoulder I naw the little fellow following, not bounding joynelly, but with a solemn step, the little parcel hugged clearly to his side, and his eyes bent suberly upon the fragen ground.

And how's Sis by this time? I asked clearly, flinging the question backward, and walking on more briskly.

"Reat the same," said the liey, brightening a little, and skipping into a livalier pace.

"About the same, sh? and how's that?" Fasked.

"Ob, she can't git around much libe she used to, you know; but she't agittin' better all the time. She set up mighty nigh all day yi terday: "and as the boy spoke the eyes lifted with the old lissh, and the little frowsy head tossed with the old defiance.

"Why, she not down sick?" said I. When the phrase did eventually writhe threw gible, my relief was such that I sat down and in my fancy framed's grim, unicycly tune that spited it, and ed with it, in an undertone of

How fur-how fur.

Is it from here to Happiness?

From here to Happiness?

When I returned, that same refrain rode back into the city with me. All the gay metropolis was robing for the banquet and the ball. All the windows of the crowded thoroughfares were kindling into splendor. Along the streets rode lordly carriages, so weight-

head tossed with the old defiance.

"Why, she not down sick!" said I, a sudden ache of sorrow smiling me.

"Yes, replied the boy, she's been bid a long time. You see, he broke in by way of explanation, she didn't have to shoes ner nothin' when winterchine, and kind of took sold, you know, and that give her the whoopin' cough so is she couldn't git around much. You hat oft to see her now! Oh, she's cuttin' all right now, you can be!! and she eaid, yielerday she'd be plum well Christmas, and that's only tomory to some your said as the little for counted this stullant speech, he paried round itse, a nother.

"Hil Jamesy!" I called after him.

chains by Arthur with the control of the control of

in the city, and I sometimes sleep there, when I work late. And now ! want to ask a very special favor of you," I continued, taking a little sealed packet from my pocket: "here's a little box that you're to take to Bia, with my compliments—the compliments of the season, you understand --and tell her I sent it, with particular directions that she shouldn't break it open till Christmas morning-not till Christmas morning, understandi Then you tell her that I would like very much to come and see her, and it she says all right-and you must give me a good 'send-off,' and she'll say all right if 'Jamesy' says all right -then come back here, say two hours from now, or three hours, or tonight, anyway, and we'll go down and see

Sis together—what do you say?" The boy nodded dublously. "Honest—must I do all that, sure enough?"
"Will you?" said I; "that's what I
want to know;" and I pushed back the dusky little face and looked into

the bewildered eyes. "Solid?" he queried, gravely,

"Solid," I repeated, handing him the box. "Will you come?" 'W'y, 'course I will, on'y I was jist a-thinkin'--"

"Just thinking what?" said I, as the little fellow paused abruptly and shook the box auspiciously at his ear. "Just thinking what?" I repeated; "for I must go now; good-by.Just thinking what?"

"Oh, nothin'," said the boy, backing off and staring at me in a phase of wonder akin to awe.—"Nothin', on'y I was jist a-thinkin' that you was a little the curiousest rooster I ever see."

Three hours later, as I sat alone, he came in upon me timidly to say he had not been home yet, having "run acrost the old man jist a-bilin', and had to git him corralled 'fore he dropped down som'er's in the snow; but I'm a gittin' long bully with him now," he added with a deep sigh of relief, "'cause he's so full he'll haf to let go purty soon. Say you'll be here?

I nodded silently, and he was gone. The merry peals of laughter rang up from the streets like mockery. The jingling of bells, the clatter and confusion of the swarming thoroughfares, flung up to me not one glad murmur of delight; the faint and far-off blaring of a dreamy waltz, blown breezelike over the drowsy ear of night, had sounded sweeter to me had I stood amidst the band, with every bellowing horn about my ears, and the drums and clashing cymbals howling mad. I couldn't work, I couldn't read. I

couldn't rest; I could only pace about. I heard the clock strike ten, and strike it hard; I heard it strike eloven, viciously; and twelve it held out at arm's length, and struck it full be tween the eyes, and let it drop-stone, dead. O I saw the blood pose from its ears, and saw the white foats frees. pon its linsi. I was along

It was three o'clock before the boy returned.

had a fearful time with the old man, and he went on so when I did git him in I was 'most afeard to leave him; but he kind o' went to sleep at last, and Molly she come over to see how Sis was a gittin'; and Sis said she'd like to see you if you'd come now, you know, while they sin't no racket goin'

"Come, then," said f, buttoning my cost closely at the throat, "I am ready;" and a moment later we had stepped into the frosty night.



helf cunning half sliding alon from payenent in the lead or donned the little funzy cap its, and forth fine to time its, at his ven, admirtur els inhedow on the mow way comed but a little very comed but a little very center of the city, but

of along through marrow aller may shere the re

well as all other Jewelry of Quality can't be beat! Come see!! Cash Teweler

"Perfectly

is about what she'll say if you

Our prices on Diamonds, as

Lovely!"

be O. K. in every detail.

